



PARTNERS IN CRIME PREVENTION

MARCH/APRIL 2014

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SHERIFF'S OFFICE- NEW WEB SITE 1

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH & SOCIAL MEDIA- INTRODUCTION 2

SOCIAL MEDIA- STUDY FINDINGS 2

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH & SOCIAL MEDIA- TOOLS 3

SOCIAL MEDIA- IT DOESN'T REPLACE 911 3

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH & SOCIAL MEDIA- RULES OF THUMB 4

SHERIFF'S OFFICE—NEW WEB SITE

The Sheriff's Office web site has a new look in conjunction with the revamping of the web site services for the county. The new web site is an update of the 2003 technology that has been in place for several years. It should be smoother and faster to find information that you need. It also is more oriented for use by consumers.

The Sheriff's Office part of the web site is easier to get around. The main page shows links to the Sheriff's Office's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and You-Tube accounts so that you can quickly find the latest posting for news from the Sheriff's Office.

Along the left side of the page you can find links to the most common features of the web site such as the Jail Registry, Online Crime Report feature, Registered Sex Offenders, and other information.

For information about Crime Prevention go to *Get Involved*.

The Online Crime Report page allows you to report incidents that are not an emergency, that there are not known suspects, and than any lost, stolen, damaged property are under \$5,000 in

worth. If you have an emergency, crime in progress or suspicious activity in progress call 911. if you have information about a suspect in a crime (name or description) call 911 and ask to talk to a deputy. If the dollar amount of damaged, or stolen property is over \$5,000 call 911 and ask to talk to a deputy.

You can also receive alerts from the Sheriff's Office. Click on the "Stay Informed" icon on the left side of the web page, fill in your email address, or cell phone number if you want text alerts, then check off the alerts that you want.

Current Sheriff's Office alerts include:

- Under "News Flash", select "Sheriff" for alerts from the Sheriff's Office's Public Information Officer.

This link from The Herald has more information about the county's revamped web site:

<http://www.heraldnet.com/article/20140218/NEWS01/140219127>



**Ty Trenary, Sheriff
Snohomish County
Sheriff's Office**

3000 Rockefeller
M/S 606
Everett, WA 98201
425-388-3393
<http://sheriff.snoco.org>

SOCIAL MEDIA- STUDY FINDINGS

Studies have shown that people who use the internet to communicate with others in their neighborhoods form strong social ties, know more of their neighbors, and talk to them more in person. Neighborhoods where members communicate online expand their interactions throughout the neighborhood.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH & SOCIAL MEDIA- INTRODUCTION

Neighborhood Watch has been around for a long time. Begun in the late 1960's, the concept has relied on neighbors communicating with each other and looking out for each other. The key word is "communicate."

Through much of the time that local police agencies have been encouraging neighborhood watches most people had three practical modes of communication; face to face in meetings or by visiting their neighbors, the telephone (telephone trees), and with paper flyers distributed door to door or via the mail. The same methods were what the public could use to communicate with local police agencies.

While the traditional methods could spread information quickly, they were still laborious to implement. It takes time to organize and advertise a meeting. Calling your assigned neighbors on the telephone tree still takes time.

With the advent of the world wide web new tools have been developed that provide faster, more responsive communications. Email, social media such as Facebook and You-Tube have become second nature so that anyone who remembers the good old days wonders how we could get anything done before the internet.

Friends, families and neighbors are exploring the new methods to share

their thoughts, events, and pictures. Government is also experimenting with social media to varying degrees.

The Snohomish County Sheriff's Office has Facebook, Twitter, and You-Tube accounts that it uses from time to time. Three cases show that use of social media can be a great help in apprehending suspects. In November 2013 You-Tube was helpful in identifying two suspects who were suspected of using stolen credit cards at the Seattle Premium outlet Mall. Two arrests were made. Also in November video of two suspects burglarizing a home led to the identification and apprehension of two suspects. In December, video posted on You-Tube helped identify and apprehend one suspect in a beating and robbery of a taxi driver. ([http://sheriff.snoco.org/Press Release/ PR Doc/2013/12 19 13 Video success.html](http://sheriff.snoco.org/Press%20Release/PR%20Doc/2013/12%2019%2013%20Video%20success.html))

As social media matures, citizens and local government needs to be open to using the new tools to improve communications within our neighborhoods and between communities and local police agencies. As we use social media, the goal needs to be to make our communities safer so that we can enjoy our work and families.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH & SOCIAL MEDIA- TOOLS

Social media tools have been around for a while. Their benefit allows people with common interests to communicate easily with each other. Business, government and the press often have a presence on all major social media platforms. For example, the Sheriff's Office uses Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to broadcast information to the public. You may not be able to maintain a presence on a lot of social media platforms, but using one or two will have its advantages.

Here are some of the major social media platforms, most you probably have heard about:

Email- an old stalwart. Email is universally accepted for use by business, government, family and friends. Don't discount email as a primary method to communicate with your Neighborhood Watch organization. Many people only use email as their electronic form of communication. Most email services allow you to organize email into distribution lists or groups. Using groups makes it easy to quickly send an email to your Neighborhood Watch. Include email as your basic method of communications even if you use other social media tools.

Facebook- The major social media around the world. Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/>) has received much publicity for several years. Many people like to keep up with friends and family on it. You can set up a closed group for your Neighborhood Watch that allows you to post information only to those within your neighborhood. As an administrator you can choose who to let into your closed

group. By allowing other community related subjects to be discussed in the group, you can have a vibrant community online all related to your physical community.

Twitter- 140 characters of news. Twitter (<https://twitter.com/>) has also received much publicity. News organizations often use it to announce breaking news throughout the day and night. You can also organize your "tweets" by subject by using lists which your followers can see when they follow you. You can also make your Twitter account a private account so that those who want to participate need to have your permission to follow you.

Private social networks- Private social networks have a mission to build stronger and safer communities by providing a secure and easy way for members of local neighborhoods to communicate. Two private social networks are:

Next Door (<https://nextdoor.com/>) is used by the Lake Ketchum neighborhood in north Snohomish County. With it, neighbors can exchange messages, inform the neighborhood about a burglary, lost pet, or announce a school concert.

I-neighbors (<https://www.i-neighbors.org/>) is a similar service with similar features.

SOCIAL MEDIA- IT DOESN'T REPLACE 911

Social media helps everyone in a neighborhood to be aware of crime around them. Awareness helps individuals to make decisions. Do they need to check the security around their house? Do they need to change their behavior (like lock the doors to their car parked in the driveway)? Do they need to look out for a specific suspicious vehicle?

But, when something happens, a crime in progress or suspicious activity, the priority should be to call 911 first. A timely 911 call can help deputies to arrive in time to catch the burglar or find out what the suspicious activity is all about. Call 911 first, then post on your social media site.

NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH & SOCIAL MEDIA- RULES OF THUMB

There are some things to consider when you operate your group, whether you choose email, Twitter, Facebook or a private social network.

Closed vs open group. A closed group means you, as the administrator, choose who participates in the group. An open group means that anyone can read postings or join in the discussions. An open group has its place, but for the purposes of a Neighborhood Watch a closed group might meet your needs better. You can limit the membership to your neighborhood or homeowner's association. Many people in your neighborhood would probably appreciate limiting discussions to the neighborhood that they live in.

Don't limit the subject to Neighborhood Watch. Your initial motivation might be to inform your neighbors about crime going on in the area, but after a while that crime will hopefully go away. You want the discussion to continue, not just on the negative about crime but about positive things in the neighborhood also. Keeping the network vibrant makes it a useful communications conduit for any future emergencies or crime problems. Encourage exchange of information such as local business and service recommendations; selling or giving away personal or household items that you no longer need; discussing community issues (without campaigning or demonizing differing points of view; advertise local community or school

events; provide support to neighbors who have special needs.

Treat everyone with respect. Nextdoor recommends the following guidelines in operating a group:

- Assume good intentions in others and give them the benefit of the doubt.
- Disagree without being disagreeable; focus on issues not personal attacks.
- Practice moderation and don't dominate the conversation with too many posts.
- Send private messages or postings to a group when a limited audience is more appropriate.
- Don't use profanity. Don't use discriminatory language.

Respect people's privacy. When describing criminal incidents such as burglaries, car prowls, vandalism, etc. do not name victims or potential suspects. If you have a suspect in mind, tell a deputy in private or pass that information to the Sheriff's Telephone Tip Line. Victims may not want the world to know that they were victimized. Also, do not use a specific address to describe the location of a crime. Use the 100 block, such as the 3200 block of Maple Street. By respecting privacy, you will receive the cooperation of everyone in your neighborhood.

CRIME PREVENTION COORDINATORS

PRECINCT COMMANDERS

South Precinct
Lt. Rob Palmer
425-388-5262
rob.palmer@snoco.org

North Precinct
Lt. Kathi Lang
425-388-5201
kathi.lang@snoco.org

East Precinct
Lt. Monte Beaton
425-388-6262
monte.beaton@snoco.org

SHERIFF'S OFFICE CRIME PREVENTION WEB PAGE:

<http://www.snohomishcountywa.gov/289/Crime-Prevention>

NEWSLETTER INFO

EDITOR

Steve Moller

If you have questions regarding this newsletter or any articles that appear in it, please contact the editor at neighborhoodwatch@snoco.org

TIP LINES



Snohomish County Sheriff's Office: 425-388-3845

<http://www.snoco.org/app/ssh/anonymoustips/>

Crime Stoppers of Puget Sound: 1-800-222-8477